

USDA Headquarters
Executive Master Gardener Program
GUIDELINES

February 2011



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WHAT IS THE USDA EXECUTIVE MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM?

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has established a volunteer program entitled the Executive Master Gardener program. The program's mission is to train individuals interested in volunteering with The People's Garden at USDA Headquarters.

Executive Master Gardener volunteers play an important role in The People's Garden effort by educating the public about safe, effective, and sustainable horticultural practices that build healthy gardens, landscapes, and communities. Executive Master Gardeners are representatives of USDA and work as members of a team while completing volunteer activities onsite or within the community.

The People's Garden Initiative has a vested interest in developing a corps of enthusiastic, knowledgeable and dedicated USDA employees, who would like to participate and be involved with this movement as Executive Master Gardener volunteers.

QUALIFICATIONS

Individuals who are interested in becoming Executive Master Gardener volunteers must possess the following qualifications:

- Willingness, commitment and time to volunteer.
- Enjoy working with plants and people of all ages.
- A strong interest in horticulture or home gardening.

- Ability to communicate and share knowledge effectively and diplomatically with others.

TRAINING AND CERTIFYING VOLUNTEERS

Becoming an Executive Master Gardener requires 40 hours of commitment per calendar year. To become an Executive Master Gardener one must:

1. Complete 16 hours of core training

16 hours of core training includes an orientation session, 12 hours of instruction, a garden tour, and the final exam review session. Classes are taught by State Extension Master Gardener Coordinators and topic experts. Topics covered include garden botany; soils; fertilizers; general plant health; integrated pest management; water use and conservation; wildlife management; and finding answers to garden questions. Information related to each topic will be included on the final exam. Practice exam questions will be discussed at the final exam review session.

2. Take and pass the final exam

(with a passing score of 75% or better)

3. Commit to 16 hours of volunteer service

16 hours of volunteer service must be completed before certification. Volunteer activities will be administered through the program. Most volunteer opportunities will encompass some type of public education or outreach component. Volunteers could be requested for a single event, or a series of special events. Volunteers can help plant and maintain The People's Garden at Headquarters; conduct horticultural tours; teach sustainable agriculture and

horticulture practices; or collect evaluation data to measure program impact. Work with other volunteers to plant a People's Garden within the community, glean from a farmer's fields or beautify a school. There are many ways you can lend a hand in making a difference – only a few ideas shared here.

4. Complete 8 hours of continuing education. Opportunities, such as horticultural field trips, lectures or workshops, to earn continuing education hours will be scheduled periodically during the summer, fall and winter.

5. Get certified

Executive Master Gardeners will become certified after completing the 40 hour commitment and passing the final exam. Volunteers receive a signed certificate, name badge, and People's Garden shirt.

REGISTRATION

USDA employees interested in becoming an Executive Master Gardener Volunteer can register online beginning at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, March 8, 2011. Registration is available to 120 persons on a first-come, first-serve basis.

To register for the volunteer program follow these simple steps:

1. Go to www.pgvolunteer.usda.gov
2. Enter your eAuthentication Login
3. Click on Register for EMG Class of 2011
4. Fill out the Volunteer Application
5. Click Submit

DID YOU KNOW?

The Executive Master Gardener program is patterned as an abbreviated version of your local Extension Master Gardener program. Extension Master Gardeners undergo more extensive training and volunteer commitments, up to 75 hours each, in some states. If you would like to serve as a master gardener in your community, contact your state's program coordinator: http://www.extension.org/pages/State_and_Provincial_Master_Gardener_Coordinators

Feel free to do both programs!

The Food and Agriculture Act of 1981 (7 U.S.C. 2272) authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to establish volunteer programs. Volunteer opportunities must be made available to all interested persons without regard to race, color, creed, age (except as provided herein), sex, disabling condition, sexual orientation or any non- merit factor.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

Executive Master Gardener Program

2011 CORE TRAINING SCHEDULE

DATE	TIME	TRAINING COURSE
Thursday, March 24	12 noon - 1:30 pm	Volunteer Orientation & The People's Garden
Tuesday, March 29	12 noon - 1:00 pm	Garden Botany
Thursday, March 31	12 noon - 1:00 pm	Garden Botany Lab
Tuesday, April 5	12 noon - 1:00 pm	Soil & Fertility in the Garden
Thursday, April 7	12 noon - 1:00 pm	Soil & Fertility in the Garden Lab
Tuesday, April 12	12 noon - 1:00 pm	Introduction to Garden IPM
Thursday, April 14	12 noon - 2:00 pm	Garden Plant Health Lab
Tuesday, April 19	12 noon - 1:00 pm	Garden Insects
Thursday, April 21	12 noon - 1:00 pm	Water Use & Conservation Lab
Tuesday, April 26	12 noon - 12:30 pm	Types of Public Gardens & Their Value
	12:30 pm - 1:00pm	Gardening & the Hungry
Thursday, April 28	12 noon - 1:00 pm	Encouraging & Managing Garden Wildlife Lab
Tuesday, May 3	12 noon - 12:30 pm	Garden Pesticide Use & Environmental Stewardship
	12:30 pm - 1:00pm	Finding Answers to Garden Questions
Thursday, May 5	12 noon - 1:30 pm	People's Garden Tour
Tuesday, May 10	12 noon - 1:00 pm	Exam Review Session

The above trainings are mandatory to fulfill the 16 hours of core training required.
